

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 6, 1826.

Mr. HENDRICKS, from the Committee on Roads and Canals, to whom were referred sundry documents relative to certain roads in the Territory of Florida,

REPORTED:

That, by act of Congress, of the 28th of February, 1824, the President was authorized "to cause to be surveyed and marked, the route for a public road, from Cape Florida to St. Augustine; that this service was committed to Colonel Gadsden, who, from the difficulties encountered in its execution, was unable to accomplish it prior to the last session of Congress, having progressed, the first season, no further than the river St. Lucie, a distance of 189 miles; about two-thirds of the distance from St. Augustine to the Cape; and that, during the last year, the survey was finished.

The report of Colonel Gadsden represents the country South of St. Augustine as alluvial, and formed by continual encroachments on the sea, and the whole country, South of the Moschetto, as affording but feeble allurements to an agricultural population; the only soil fit for cultivation being on the margins of rivers and inlets. The St. Lucie is said to be beyond the ultimate limit of population on the Atlantic border.

The report alluded to authorizes the opinion, that a road to New Smyrna is all that the present condition of the country South of St. Augustine requires; and that the improvement contemplated should commence at the St. Mary's, connecting this road with the mail road from Savannah to the Southern limits of Georgia. This opinion is also strengthened by information derived from other sources. The route of the King's road is preferred, which "will require little more expense than for the repairs of old causeways and bridges." The distance is 150 miles.

This road, in the opinion of the Committee, is necessary and important, and the estimate for it is \$11,000.

The Committee further report, that, by act of the 3d of March last, the sum of \$12,000 was appropriated, for the purpose of opening a road from Colerain, in Georgia, to Tampa Bay, in Florida; that the labor and expense of this road, from the character of the intervening

country, is found to be much greater than had been anticipated: that the sum heretofore appropriated will be sufficient to make a road suitable for the dry seasons of the year; but for the necessary causeways and bridges, and for the completion of the road, a further sum of \$6,000 is necessary.

The appropriations heretofore made, for the road from Pensacola to St. Augustine, will, it is believed, be sufficient for the opening and bridging that road, with the exception of a bridge over the St. Sebastian's river, in the neighborhood of St. Augustine. The want of a bridge, at this place, cuts off, in a great degree, a free intercourse with the interior, and destroys much of the value of the road to Pensacola. This bridge, too, will be equally important to the road South to Smyrna and North to the St. Mary's. It is estimated that \$5,000 will be sufficient for that purpose.

The Committee report a bill for the aforesaid objects.

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WASHINGTON, *January 17, 1826.*

SIR: The subject of an appropriation for roads in Florida, having been referred to the consideration of the committee of which you are chairman, I ask leave to recommend a few observations to your attention.

Of the line of communication which connects the seaports of the Atlantic the old King's road, as it is usually called, is a conspicuous part; and being flanked, to the westward, by the great Okefonoko Swamp, it is the main avenue into East Florida. Having been originally constructed of durable causeways, a great portion of them remain unimpaired; but the obstructions between them are so insurmountable, that this section of the country is, in a great measure, excluded from communication. This road extends from St. Mary's river to New Smyrna, a distance of 150 miles; from whence, continuing southwardly, there is a safe and commodious boat passage, by Indian river, for 145 miles, to the vicinity of Cape Florida: the road in question, therefore, is an important link, from the imperfection of which a whole chain of communication is destroyed, and the peninsula of Florida is only accessible by the circuitous routes which present themselves in the West, or by the inconvenient alternative of Atlantic navigation. This old road stretches through a district of increasing population, and at its southern extremity are the rich hammoc lands of Smyrna, Indian river, and St. John's; and, on either side, throughout its whole extent, are important tracts of fertile land, affording the materials for a dense agricultural population.

I beg leave to refer you to the map, by which you will perceive that a range of country, exceeding 300 miles, is shut out from communication, whilst, at an expense comparatively small, it might be thrown open, and the inhabitants admitted to a participation of the benefit of a free intercourse with the adjoining States, whilst, at the same time, such an highway would eminently tend to encourage the fisheries, and

call into action the dormant resources of the Peninsula; to increase the strength of a frontier peculiarly exposed, and to enhance the value of the public lands. It is estimated that \$11,000 would be sufficient to give to this road the necessary repairs, and, independently of the considerations I have mentioned, I beg leave to suggest, whether the necessity of opening a military line of communication, be not of itself a sufficient inducement for the appropriation.

Connected with this subject, it is my duty to mention that the main road from Pensacola to St. Augustine is still incomplete, from the want of a bridge at the River San Sebastians. The site of this bridge derives its importance from the fact of being in the line of communication between the important military post of St. Augustine, and all other parts of the country; and the necessity of constructing a bridge, arises from the character of the bed of that river; its shores are shelving and covered with soft alluvion; and, being under the influence of the tides, the landing is inaccessible to ferry boats, except at high water. The approach to this city is, therefore, interrupted, and the object incomplete for which the road was made; and Captain Burch, who superintended its construction, having estimated the sum of \$5,000 to be necessary to establish a bridge, I beg leave to suggest to the Committee the expediency of this appropriation.

And, finally, Sir, I have to represent, that the road leading to the opposite coast, from St. Mary's to Tampa Bay, and for which an appropriation of \$12,000 was formerly made, is still incomplete, from the inadequacy of this sum; and the Superintendent, having estimated the sum of \$6,000, as necessary for the accomplishment of the work, it is my duty to recommend this appropriation, also, to the consideration of the Committee.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JOS. M. WHITE,

*Delegate.*

Hon. WM. HENDRICKS,

*Of the Senate.*

